

DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL

The California Highway Patrol is a law enforcement and traffic safety agency reporting to Business, Transportation and Housing Agency Secretary Maria Contreras-Sweet and Governor Gray Davis.



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CHP TO TARGET SAFETY BELT VIOLATORS AND DUI DRIVERS FOR LABOR DAY

SACRAMENTO – After the bloodiest July 4 holiday weekend in six years, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) over the Labor Day Weekend will turn up the heat on motorists who ignore their safety belts and drive drunk.

“I’m putting every available officer on the road during the weekend,” said CHP Commissioner D. O. “Spike” Helmick. “I never want to see another holiday with so many needless deaths.”

Helmick said that of the 50 people who died in CHP jurisdiction over the recent July 4 holiday, 32 were not wearing safety belts. In all jurisdictions, 63 people died over July 4.

“Many of the people who died would be with us today, celebrating Labor Day with their friends and family, if they had buckled their safety belts,” Helmick said.

The CHP is launching a major campaign to increase seat belt use in California that includes two federal grants. “At 91.1 percent, we already have the best record in the country. But we’re doing everything in our power to get that other 8.9 percent of motorists to buckle up. That means a balanced approach of enforcement and education,” he said.

The officers’ other Labor Day target will be drunk drivers. CHP officers arrested 1,377 drunk drivers statewide over the 2001 Labor Day Weekend. “Before you attend that holiday barbecue, designate a driver. Don’t drive if you’ve had even one drink,” Helmick said.

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According to Helmick, the Labor Day Weekend is also an Operation CARE (Combined Accident Reduction Effort) holiday. Operation CARE is a joint program of the nation's highway patrols that places special safety emphasis on interstate highways during holiday periods. CARE highways in California include Interstates 80, 40, 15 (San Bernardino to the Nevada border) and 5 (Bakersfield north to the Oregon line).

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